

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 DRC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

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R 221035Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1901

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

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AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 06288

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: FRG FOREIGN OFFICE IN SEARCH OF NEW LEADERSHIP

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES AND BASED ON OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, THE IMPENDING MOVE OF FONMIN SCHEEL TO THE PRESIDENCY, ACCOMPANIED BY FONOFF STATE SECRETARY FRANK, IS CREATING A LACK OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FRG FONOFF THAT IS MAKING IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE GERMAN FOREIGN-POLICY MAKING APPARATUS TO FUNCTION PROPERLY IN THE PRESENT TRANSITION PERIOD. SCHEEL AND FRANK ARE ALREADY MENTALLY DISENGAGING FROM FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE BURDEN ON THE FEW REMAINING SENIOR SUBSTANTIVE OFFICIALS IN THE FONOFF IS ENORMOUS. THE EXPECTED ARRIVAL OF GENSCHER TO REPLACE SCHEEL IS NOT EXPECTED TO MAKE THINGS EASIER, IN THE SHORT RUN AT LEAST. AN ENTIRELY NEW TEAM WILL BE TAKING OVER AND A LENGTHY BREAKING-IN PERIOD CAN PROBABLY BE EXPECTED. ALL OF THIS IS OCCURRING AT A TIME WHEN GERMAN LEADERSHIP WITHIN EUROPE AND IN THE US-EUROPEAN CONTEXT SHOULD BE STRONGER THAN EVER. THE OPPOSITE IS, IN FACT, THE CASE. THE FONOFF IS WEAK AND IS LIKELY TO REMAIN SO FOR MDNTHS TO COME. WHETHER THE SLACK WILL BE TAKEN UP BY THE CHANCELLERY, ESPECIALLY MINISTER BAHR, IS OPEN TO QUESTION. SOME EFFORT MAY BE MADE FROM THAT DIRECTION BUT THE CHANCELLERY ITSELF, WITH PRESSING DOMESTIC CONCERNS CROWDING IN ON IT, IS NOT DISPLAYING MUCH SENSE OF FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION THESE DAYS AND, MOREOVER, THE TOUGH-MINDED GENSCHER ONCE HE IS INSTALLED, IS NOT APT TO PUT UP WITH MEDDLING FROM BAHR AND COMPANY. END SUMMARY.

2. FONMIN SCHEEL IS ALREADY SHOWING SIGNS OF DISENGAGING FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, PREPARING HIMSELF TO ASSUME THE FEDERAL PRESIDENCY AT THE END OF JUNE. HE
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HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMAGE ORIENTED AND LESS INVOLVED THAN EVER BEFORE IN THE REAL WORK OF THE MINISTRY. EVEN HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN BONN THIS WEEKEND IS REGARDED BY HISAIDES AS MORE OF A SOCIAL OCCASION THAN AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS. NOT ALL OF THIS IS SCHEEL'S FAULT: HE IS WELL AWARE THAT THE WEAKNESS OF SEVERAL OF THE EC GOVERNMENTS AND THE SITUATION IN PARIS

WILL MAKE PROGRESS IN THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION FIELD OR
IN THE SENSITIVE AREA OF US-EUROPEAN COOPERATION
PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. SO HE APPEARS TO BE BOWING OUT
OF THE SCENE GRACEFULLY, CERTAINLY DISAPPOINTED THAT
THEHOPE FOR A DYNAMIC GERMAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EC HAVE
BEEN SHATTERED BY EVENTS, MOST OF THEM BEYOND HIS
CONTROL.

3. BUT SCHEEL WAS NEVER AN AGGRESSIVE FOREIGN MINISTER,
SO HIS DEPARTURE ALONE WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO HARM THE
FUNCTIONING OF THE FONOFF. HOWEVER, HE IS TAKING WITH
HIM TO THE PRESIDENCY AS HIS STATE SECRETARY (IN LIEU OF
THE PRESENT INCUMBENT, SPANGENBERG) THE PRESENT FONOFF
STATE SECRETARY PAUL FRANK. FRANK HAS LONG BEEN THE
REAL MOVER, POLICY INITIATOR AND EFFECTIVE LEADER IN THE
BONN FOREIGN OFFICE. ALTHOUGH HE IS RETAINING HIS
INTEREST IN THE WORKINGS OF THE MINISTRY LONGER THAN
SCHEEL, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE TOO IS MENTALLY PREPARING
HIMSELF FOR HIS FORTHCOMING MOVE.

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R 221035Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1902

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BONN 06288

4. THESE DEVELOPMENTS, SO LDNG IN PREPARATION AND UNDER DISCUSSION IN BONN POLITICAL CIRCLES, HAVE TENDED TO OVERLOAD THE FEW REMAINING SENIOR POLITICAL OFFICIALS IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE. THE VARIOUS SPECULATIONS ABOUT WHO WOULD REPLACE WHOM AND ABOUT THE NUMBER OF FDP COLLEAGUES GENSCHER WOULD BRING WITH HIM TO THE FONOFF HAS ALSO TENDED TO PREOCCUPY THE REMAINING SENIOR OFFICIALS. MOST OF THEM ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF MORE THAN USUAL STRAIN, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THEIR KEY ROLE IN THE NUMEROUS EC MEETINGS AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS. FOR EXAMPLE, POLITICAL DIRECTOR VAN WELL WHO IS THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURE IN THE MINISTRY AFTER FRANK IS ALMOST ALWAYS ON THE MOVE, TO BRUSSELS, PARIS, MOSCOW OR WHEREVER. HIS FEW TRUSTED SENIOR ASSISTANTS ARE TECHNICALLY COMPETENT BUT LACK THE CLOUT TO TAKE DECISIONS THAT WOULD CARRY WEIGHT WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OR IN THE CABINET.

5. THE NET RESULT HAS BECOME CLEAR IN RECENT WEEKS: THE

FONOFF HAS SIMPLY BEGUN TO CEASE FUNCTIONING FULLY EFFECTIVELY IN THE FOREIGN-POLICY MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING FIELD. DECISIONS, WHEN MADE, ARE MADE SLOWLY AND USUALLY WITH LITTLE ASSERTIVENESS. THERE IS LITTLE THINKING BEING DONE ABOUT ISSUES LYING AHEAD, AND THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE HALLS OF THE MINISTRY IS MOSTLY ONE OF WAITING FOR THE NEW REGIME.

6. THE PRESENT SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT THE NEW TEAM WILL LOOK LIKE IS AS FOLLOWS: GENSCHER WILL PROBABLY BRING IN AS HIS STATE SECRETARY (I.E., DEPUTY MINISTER) AMBASSADOR GEHLHOFF, PRESENTLY THE FRG'S MAN IN THE UN. SERIOUS THOUGHT WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN TO BRINGING VON STADEN BACK FROM WASHINGTON BUT, ACCORDING TO ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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THEORY, IT WAS FELT HE HAD BEEN THERE TOO SHORT A TIME TO RETURN HIM TO BONN: ALSO, THERE IS THE FEELING IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT VON STADEN IS GETTING ALONG WELL WITH SENIOR USG OFFICIALS. A MORE CYNICAL (AND PROBABLY MORE ACCURATE) ASSESSMENT OF GEHLHOFF'S CHOICE OVER VON STADEN IS THAT GEHLHOFF IS AN SPD MEMBER WHILE VON STADEN'S PARTY LOYALTY IS UNCERTAIN. THUS, THE SPD LEADERSHIP HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO TRY TO KEEP SOME SORT OF GRIP ON THE FOREIGN OFFICE LEADERSHIP BY HAVING ITS OWN STATE SECRETARY THERE SINCE IT HAS APPARENTLY NOT MANAGED TO WANGLE THE MINISTER'S JOB AWAY FROM THE FDP.

7. AS WE UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION, GEHLHOFF WOULD PROBABLY BE REPLACED IN NEW YORK BY THE PRESENT FONOFF POLICY PLANNING CHIEF BRUNNER. POLITICAL DIRECTOR VAN WELL WOULD STAY ON IN HIS PRESENT JOB TO PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED CONTINUITY. THERE ARE FAIRLY RELIABLE REPORTS THAT GENSCHER WILL BRING WITH HIM TO THE FONOFF A GOOD NUMBER OF FDP MEMBERS FROM HIS OWN INTERIOR MINISTRY AND PERHAPS ALSO SOME OTHER COLLEAGUES WHOM HE CONSIDERS PERSONALLY LOYAL TO HIM. THESE NEW MEN, MOST OF WHOM WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NO FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERIENCE, WOULD FORM THE POLICY-MAKING COTERIE AROUND GENSCHER. THE GENERAL FEELING IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE IS, THEREFORE, THAT MOST OF 1974 IS GOING TO BE SOMETHING OF A BREAKING-IN PERIOD FOR THE MINISTER AND HIS NEW TEAM. THERE IS SOME NATURAL CONCERN IN THE FONOFF THAT GENSCHER MAY PROVE TO BE A TOUGH TASKMASTER WHO MAY NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THE TRADITIONS OF A FAIRLY HIDE-BOUND FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE BRINGS WITH HIM A REPUTATION FOR A CERTAIN BRUSQUENESS FROM THE INTERIOR MINISTRY.

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME OBSERVERS ACQUAINTED WITH

GENSCHER BELIEVE HE WILL BE A MUCH HARDER WORKER THAN SCHEEL, WHO TENDED NOT TO OVEREXTEND HIMSELF IN DOING HIS HOMEWORK. THEY ALSO BELIEVE HE WILL BE MORE DIRECT AND POSSIBLY MORE DIFFICULT IN HIS DEALINGS WITH FOREIGN AMBASSADORS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS, FOR HE IS A TOUGH AND HARDMINDED POLITICIAN WITH A KEEN INSTINCT FOR DEALING WITH IMPORTANT MATTERS AND REJECTING WHAT HE

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REGARDS AS NONSENSE. AFTER ALMOST FIVE YEARS OF SCHEEL'S SOMEWHAT FUZZY APPROACH TO DIFFICULT PROBLEMS, GENSCHER MAY THEREFORE BE A USEFUL ADDITION TO THE FONOFF AS FAR AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED.

9. COMMENT: WITH ALL OF THIS SAID, OUR OWN ASSESSMENT IS THAT GENSCHER MAY WELL TURN OUT TO BE A GOOD MINISTER WHOSE PROCLIVITIES WILL BE QUITE PRO-AMERICAN, POSSIBLY NOT AS PRO-EUROPEAN AS, AND PERHAPS WITH A MORE NATIONAL ACCENT THAN SCHEEL. BUT IT WILL TAKE SOME TIME FOR

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R 221035Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1903

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BONN 06288

GENSCHER TO GET TO THE POINT OF BEING THE SORT OF FOREIGN MINISTER THAT WILL PROVE A USEFUL FRIEND TO US; AND WE WILL NEED TIME TO CULTIVATE HIM WITH SOME CARE IN THE PERIOD AHEAD. THE AMBASSADOR HAD CALLS WITH HIM AS MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS AND HAS ESTABLISHED A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM, FINDING HIM GENERALLY FRIENDLY, HELPFUL AND WELL-BRIEFED. THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM IS THAT THE FRG FOREIGN MINISTRY IS NOW IN A PERIOD OF SOME DISARRAY AND, WHILE SOME OF THIS WILL DISAPPEAR WITH THE GENSCHER TEAM'S ARRIVAL IN THE SUMMER, THE CHANCES FOR REAL GERMAN LEADERSHIP IN EUROPEAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS SEEM SLIM FOR MOST OF THE REMAINDER OF THIS YEAR. WE SHOULD PROBABLY NOT OVERESTIMATE THE CAPACITY OF GENSCHER AND THE FONOFF, THEREFORE, TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR US

POSITIONS IN COMING MONTHS. HE AND HIS TEAM WILL BE STILL TRYING TO FIND THEIR WAY. OF COURSE, ON KEY ISSUES INVOLVING OUR MUTUAL SECURITY INTERESTS, WE WOULD EXPECT WASHINGTON AND BONN VIEWS TO BE VERY CLOSE.

10. THERE IS, OF COURSE, ALWAYS THE CHANCE THAT THE CHANCELLERY, AND BAHR IN PARTICULAR, WILL TRY TO MOVE IN AND FILL PART OF THE VACUUM. THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER; THE CHANCELLERY IS SHOWING LITTLE SIGNS OF ENERGY AND SENSE OF DIRECTION, AND IS MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH DOMESTIC PARTY PROBLEMS THAN WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MOREOVER, GENSCHER IS A PROUD AND TOUGH POLITICIAN WHO IS NOT LIKELY TO ALLOW BAHR OR THE CHANCELLERY TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN AN AREA THAT GENSCHER WILL WANT TO STAKE OUT FULLY FOR HIMSELF.
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